Cover Supervision

1 Summary

The term “cover” refers to any arrangements for a class or group of pupils when the teacher normally responsible for teaching a particular class is absent from the classroom during the time they have been timetabled to teach.

“Cover Supervision” describes the situation when those arrangements do not involve “Specified Work” as defined in government regulations (i.e. active teaching) but appropriate supervision. The cover supervisor is not teaching but supervises pupils who are undertaking pre-prepared exercises or suitable activity and is expected to ensure that pupils are appropriately occupied and maintain good behaviour.

Cover supervision is only one of a range of strategies which a school may adopt to reduce significantly the amount of cover for absent colleagues which teachers at school are required to carry out.

2 Grade B Teaching Assistant

Grade B teaching assistants can be asked to provide cover supervision without extra remuneration in one of two circumstances

1. Either for a short time in an emergency, normally for a period of less than a whole lesson until the teacher returns or other arrangements are made
2. For a very short period of planned absence for less than a whole lesson. Cover supervision of this kind should be for no more than two hours a week and should be for the class in which they normally work.

In addition, it has been possible to ask a Grade B teaching assistant to provide cover supervision on a regular basis throughout the school for up to two **sessions** a week. The work should have been set by a teacher and the duties of the teaching assistant are to ensure that pupils undertake the planned work and maintain good behaviour.

3 Specified work – higher level teaching assistants

Specified work is defined in the regulations as each of the following activities:

- The person undertakes specified work in order to assist or support the work of a teacher
- The person is subject to the direction and supervision of a teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the head teacher
- The head teacher is satisfied that the person has the skills, expertise and experience to carry out specified work

When a school wishes to use someone other than a teacher to undertake specified work it may do so only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- The person undertakes specified work in order to assist or support the work of a teacher
- The person is subject to the direction and supervision of a teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the head teacher
- The head teacher is satisfied that the person has the skills, expertise and experience to carry out specified work

In determining whether a person has the skills, expertise and experience required to carry out specified work the head teacher may have regard to:

- Such standards for higher-level teaching assistants, or guidance concerning school support staff as may be published from time to time by the Secretary of State; and
- Such guidance as to contractual matters relating to school support staff as may be published from time to time by any local authority or other employers.

In the light of the regulations and of the statutory guidance on cover published by the Secretary of State and accompanying the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, the authority has determined that specified work is to be undertaken by Grade C higher-level teaching assistants and not by Grade B teaching assistants.

4 Planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time

In the case of PPA time the teacher has not been timetabled to teach in the first place, so arrangements made for the class do not come within the

definition of cover. There are arrangements to release teachers for PPA time.

Schools should therefore:

- employ additional teacher/s to take classes where Teachers of those classes are taking PPA time
- or in accordance with the statutory guidance accompanying the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, a school may use higher-level teaching assistants for this purpose

Teaching Assistants should not be used for the purpose of PPA cover.